

SOME ODD STORIES.

ADVENTURES AND INCIDENTS FAR
OUT OF THE ORDINARY.

The Blind Gambler of the Black Hills—His Story of the False Friend and Faithless Wife—How a Pistol Shot Restored His Sight—The Hunt Ended.

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Blind Joe was one of the well known characters of Deadwood in the early days of the Black Hills metropolis, and chance led me to befriend him and learn his sad story. Strange as it may seem, even though he could scarcely distinguish daylight from darkness, Joe was a gambler. Poker was his favorite game, although he sometimes ventured money on cards. He could recognize the denomination of any kind of a coin the moment his fingers touched it, but it seemed pure chance that led him in the selection of cards and the betting of his money.

He was almost invariably a winner, which was the most remarkable part of it, as he never lifted a dealt hand from the table in choosing his discards, but ran his fingers over the backs of the pasteboards as they lay face downward and cast aside one or two or three cards as the fancy struck him. He always touched the cards he drew when they were dropped before him, as if by some wonderful necromancy he could read them as he read gold and silver coins with his fingers. Having touched each card, he bunched them and let them still lay face downward, after which he either bet or passed.

From one gambling house to another Joe made his way, and wherever he stopped to engage in a game the table at which he sat was immediately surrounded by an eager and curious throng of spectators. It was these spectators who saw the blind gambler receive a fair show, for any one who attempted to play crooked with Blind Joe was promptly and summarily dealt with by the lookers. After a time the sightless sport became so well known that he could scarcely induce old gamblers to play with him, as they asserted he was in league with Satan.

More than one attempt was made to rob him of his winnings, and thus it came about that I got acquainted with him. I had followed him from the Metropole saloon one night at a late hour, and as he reached a dark and deserted portion of the street, feeling his way along with a cane he always carried, I saw a man leap upon him. Joe was felled to the ground, but I drew a revolver, uttered a shout and dashed forward, causing the robber to take to his heels.

The blind gambler was not severely injured, and I aided him to the wretched little hut in which he lived all by himself. He asked me in, and that night we became so friendly that he told me his tragic story. His name was Joseph Danvers, and, save one year of his life, he had lived as a gambler since becoming old enough to handle the cards and venture money upon them. He declared that he was born a gambler and that he did not seem suited for any other occupation, but having fallen in love with an innocent and beautiful girl before he was twenty, he was leading and did not touch a card or venture money on any game of chance for a year. The girl married him, and he cut clear of his old associates, with a single exception, making a brave attempt to live an open and honorable life. As he had saved several thousand dollars, he was able to invest in a modest business and live comfortably in a quiet way for a few months, which was the happiest period of his life.

Manson Webb was the only one of Danvers' former associates from whom he did not clear himself, and Webb retained his friendly relations with the reformed gambler, being a welcome visitor to the pretty cottage home. Danvers trusted his wife implicitly, and he did not dream that she could do a wrong until by chance the knowledge was brought to him with stunning force that her relations with Webb were not what they should be. Furious and enraged, Danvers confronted his false friend and charged him with his treachery. A struggle followed, and the husband was stricken senseless by an iron bar that Webb caught up.

That blow injured the optic nerve in Danvers' head and nearly cost him his life. When he recovered and left the hospital, it was to go forth into darkness, a blind man, and learn that his wife had fled with the treacherous gambler. Then a blind hunt—a groping through midnight gloom—began, for Danvers sought to follow and find the guilty pair. He converted everything of his that was available into money, and then, aided by a detective, sought to trace them down. The detective robbed him, and he was forced to do something to obtain more money. Then it was that chance gave revealed to him the wonderful fact that he could still play poker, but he did not understand how it was that he always seemed to select the right cards to throw away and almost without fail bet his hand for just what it was worth and no more. It was as great a mystery to him as to any one else.

Six months before coming to Deadwood he had found his wife. She was visiting Chicago, where the villainous Manson Webb had abandoned her, and ere she breathed her last she heard the lips of her sightless husband utter words of forgiveness. Over her grave he swore to devote the remainder of his life to tracking the wretch who had wrought such ruin, and as Webb was a gambler he felt that they would some day meet across the board.

"But what can you do?" I cried. "You are blind!" "You?" "I carry a revolver constantly," he said, his voice cold and hard. "If I hear him speak, I shall know him. I can play cards even though I am blind. I believe I can shoot."

That night I lay awake until near morning, my head filled with thoughts of this wonderful man and his sad history. Three days passed before I saw him again. It was a rainy night, and a great throng had gathered in the Metropole, which was the leading saloon and gambling house of the town at that time. Blind Joe had been playing and had just cleaned out Dandy Frank, a veteran poker sharp. As Frank arose from the table, cursing his ill luck, a black bearded stranger slipped into the abandoned chair, observing:

"I don't mind taking a hand, as I have a few dollars to lose."

The sightless gambler started as if thrilled by an electric shock. A revolver leaped into his hand, and he shouted:

"That voice! Manson Webb, I know you! Your life is mine!"

"Joe Danvers," gasped the man of the black beard, seeming to recognize the blind gambler for the first time. He sprang aside, wrenched out a revolver and fired just as Danvers pulled trigger. The stranger was not touched, but the blind gambler slipped from his chair to the floor without

any or a groan. The stranger's bullet had plowed along the side of Danvers' skull, stunning him for the time, and when he recovered consciousness he started up, declaring he could see as well as ever. In fact the bullet had given him a shock that had fully restored his sight in a moment, a thing the hospital doctors had been unable to do.

"Where is that devil—where's Manson Webb?" he wildly cried, looking about him.

"Waal," drawled Big Ben Weston, leader of the vigilantes, stepping forward promptly, "we reckoned as how the onery critter had throwed ye cold, Joe, and so we took him out to soak in the rain. They wuz his last words, 'a thing the hospital doctors had been unable to do.' I low you'll find him that when you wants him."

How Big Foot Died.
On the morning of Dec. 29, in his teepee, Big Foot, the Sioux chief, lay dying of pneumonia, while before the lodge, squatting in a half circle, was his entire band of warriors, fear, hatred and despair written on their grim faces. Five hundred men surrounded them, soldiers of the regular army, commanded by Colonel Forsythe. Hotchkiss guns were mounted and trained to command the camp, and at 5 o'clock the order was given to dislodge the redskins.

By Big Foot's side crouched his faithful squaw, ministering to his wants as well as she could. The flap of the teepee was lifted, and the chief could look out upon the scene that was being enacted. He had surrounded the whites in good faith, but not the ominous preparations of the fully armed soldiers, he began to fear all his followers were to be butchered without a show for their lives. He knew the warriors feared the same, although they spoke no words, for he saw the looks that were flashed from side to side beneath scowling brows.

The order came for the Indians to deliver up their arms in squads of twenties. The first squad delivered two useless muskets. This so angered the officers that, after a hasty consultation, the order was given for the cavalrymen to dismount and close in. While they did taking a stand within 20 feet of the redskins. Then a detachment was directed to go through the teepees and search for arms.

Big Foot tried to lift himself to his elbow, the fire of battle flashing from his black eyes, but his strength was far spent, and he sank back feebly. Then, all at once, a weird sound broke on the frosty air. It came from the throat of the dying chief. To his full height he arose, his lips parted, to utter a wild wailing cry. Then he was riddled by 20 bullets and fell forward on his face without uttering a sound—fell as falls the mighty monarch of the forest when riven by the lightning's blast. His squaw shrieked and sprang up, but the remorseless bullets cut her down, and she sank across Big Foot's body.

And merciful death veiled the eyes of the chief to the horrible slaughter of his people that followed—a slaughter that was misnamed the battle of Wounded Knee.

In the Stormy Night.
"One night as darkness came on," said the old sailor, continuing his reminiscences, "we found ourselves running down the Newfoundland coast before a heavy gale, having been unable to make an anchorage. The wind was steady and strong, and although everything was close reefed but a single stay, the schooner was cutting through the water with a speed that seemed equal to an express train. The Meribel, as she was called, had a cutwater like the blade of a knife, and she was certainly the fastest craft I ever saw that was not built particularly for speed."

"The crew in general felt decidedly shaky, even though Captain Jones told us over and over that there was no danger unless the wind shifted, to drive us on the lee shore, and we were all aware he knew every foot of brine from New Bedford to Greenland. He ordered two lights set aloft, while others were kept burning forward, and two men were constantly on the watch. For all of his assurance that the storm was nothing, I could see he was nervous. This was explained when he declared we were close upon the fishing banks, where sometimes the venturesome fishermen anchored their smacks and rode out anything but the severest storms."

"Barely had he made this explanation when the lookout shouted:

"Boat ahead!"
"We were right upon her when the cry was uttered, and I saw she was a small schooner that was laying at anchor, broadside toward us. With fatal carelessness she had failed to hoist a light."

"There came a sudden shock as we struck her amidships, but the speed of the Meribel was scarcely checked. We cut the strange schooner fairly in two and bore her down under the waves, while our vessel sped straight on through the wild night. In one terrible moment just after we struck the fisherman, as the stranded wreck was sinking beneath us, I caught a glimpse of two or three half naked men, who rushed from her cabin, flinging up their arms and shrieking in their despair. Their wild screams ring in my ears to this very minute."

"Onward shot the Meribel, and we were alone on the stormy sea. It was impossible to boat her in the face of that gale, and to this day I do not know what boat we struck or if one of the wrecked fishermen escaped."

GILBERT PATTEN.

An Accomplished Clerk.
"What do you think I did this morning?" one girl asked another in a cable car on their way home from a shopping jaunt.

"Goodness knows!" ejaculated the other. "You are always doing the unexpected."

"Well," continued the first girl, "I had two things on my mind that I dared not forget—a book I wanted very much and the purchase of a silk waist. So what did I do but walk into a book store, go up to the first man clerk I saw and ask, 'Do you know how much silk it takes to make a shirt waist?'"

"Oh!" gasped the other girl. "What did he say?"

"That's the funny part of it. He surveyed me with the utmost seriousness and answered promptly, 'If you want big sleeves, it will take five yards—that is, unless the silk is wide.'"

"Of course I was completely stunned, for it had dawned on me what I was doing, but I made a great effort and said gratefully: 'Thank you very much—very much. Now, will you please show me Mrs. Blank's last novel?' Then I bought the book and retired in good order. There would have been no sense in exposing my feeble-mindedness to that clerk, but I'd give a good deal to know how he keeps so well posted on dry goods."—Chicago Tribune.

The Marquis of Londonderry is the owner of the smallest pony known. It weighs only 10 pounds and at its birth was but 10 1/2 inches high.

ODDS AND ENDS.

Giotto, the artist, was a peasant's son. Coal was first used in England as fuel in 1850.

The strongest fortress in the world is Gibraltar.

The largest mammoth tusk yet discovered was 10 feet.

To find fault with our government is to blame ourselves.

Subtlety may deceive you. Integrity never will.—Cromwell.

The lungs of the average man contain about five quarts of air.

Botanists say that there are upward of 50,000 varieties of plants.

There are in British India 10,147 shops licensed for the sale of opium.

The standing army of Hawaii consists of 64 men, three of whom are generals.

The gratitude of place to expectants is a lively sense of future favors.—Walpole.

Eighty of the towns in Great Britain supply the names of 100 towns in this country.

A shoemaker at Lynn, Mass., repairs free every eleventh pair of shoes left to be fixed.

There are 11,000,000 kangaroos in Australia. What if they were all to jump at once?

At the beginning of the Christian era the relative values of gold and silver were as 9 to 1.

The average weight of the male infant at birth is seven pounds; of the female six and a half.

Try a tallow candle cut in pieces and wrapped in brown paper to keep moths from furs.

Diphtheria, pneumonia, yellow and scarlet fever are unknown in Chulalongkorn's kingdom of Siam.

Put salt on the clinkers in your stove or range while they are hot after raking down the fire, and it will remove them.

Sailors who sham illness as a means of shirking work and weather are said to be afflicted with "Cape Horn fever."

Too many follow example rather than precept, but it is safer to learn rather than to be taught.—Farwick.

If there is a streak of rank vulgarity in our society, it is glaringly shown by the display of the money cost of things.

The steam engines of the world represent the work of 1,000,000,000 men, or more than double the working population of the earth.

Heppachion, 100 years B. C., counted 1,018 stars with the naked eye and Holemaus 1,022. The telescope now counts 100,000.

The best quality of dynamite is a mixture of 75 per cent of nitroglycerin and 25 per cent of a silicious earth known as kieselguhr.

The park policemen of San Francisco use the lariat to stop runaway horses, and all are experts with the rope.

Spots on the wood of furniture may often be removed by rubbing vigorously with turpentine and sweet oil, and then renewing the polish by brisk rubbing.

The Business of Housekeeping.

A fine and profitable business for women, pursued as a profession, is that of housekeeping. Every woman thinks herself fitted to "keep house," but in sober truth those who are really fitted for it—that is, those who are thoroughly educated in its requirements so that they would have nothing to practice it as they would any other trade or profession and receive money for it—are by no means many. Yet if the women who have peculiarly strong domestic inclinations would recognize the value of their talent in toward housekeeping and then prepare themselves seriously from the first step to the last there would be a sensible addition made to the comfort of the world and a new opening established through which many women, instead of now and then one, could earn their livelihoods.

As it is now, when there seems to be nothing else that a woman can do, and she has not a home into which she can take boarders for her support, she advertises herself as a housekeeper for a gentleman's family, widower preferred. If she had learned her business, as she would have that of dressmaking, or typewriting, or school teaching, or surgery, or anything else, in short, she would never have to make that humiliating postscript of "widower preferred." In that case the widower would not be preferred. She would go into a house where there was a wife who wished and wearied for her and would pursue her duties under no offensive suspicion of an intention ultimately to marry the widower.

It would make small difference to her if her employer were man or woman, although she might perhaps slightly prefer the woman for the sake of the sympathy which one woman has for another, but she would go on with her tasks, her plans, her oversight, occupied with the house and keeping it in order, with the children and their clothes and their health, with the table, the servants, the linen, with the whole round of the year's work which keeps house and home in running order, and would pay no heed to the personality of the man of the house, as an individual pleasant or unpleasant to her, than if she were an automaton that had been wound up to go through its motions at his service.—Harper's Bazar.

A Banker's Mistake.

"I recently heard," said Mr. Gage, "of a banker in Wisconsin, a man of iron firmness, who, hearing of bank troubles in many localities, determined that he would not lend a dollar, but would collect every claim due. He enjoyed the entire confidence of the community, being a man of undoubted responsibility. Soon after the banker had determined on this policy a man of substance applied to him for a loan of \$100. The banker refused roughly on the ground that he could not spare the money. The would be borrower, from whose mind the illusion had not yet been dispelled that a bank was a fountain from which wealth flowed, was shocked and pained. He went about among other members of the community expressing his grief that this banker was in such a distressing situation. Certain depositors put their own construction upon the meaning of all this. Within a week the banker himself was a humble borrower in Chicago, having paid in hard cash 25 per cent of his liabilities to the community which had lost faith in him."—Chicago Journal.

Senator Hill's Home.

Senator Hill's residence on the Rensselaer boulevard, which he purchased last fall from the widow of the noted actor, Emmet, and which for many years was known as the "Emmet" or "Fritz Villa," has recently been rechristened by the senator with the unique and historic name of "Wolfert's Roost." This will strike a great many people as an unknown and peculiar name to give to such a fine residence and magnificent grounds as now constitute Senator Hill's home on the outskirts of Albany. But the name is very fitting to literary men, and especially to readers of Irving's works.—Albany Journal.

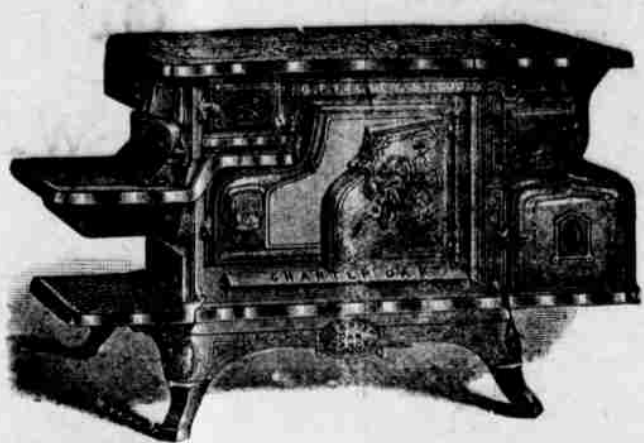
Almost the sole hereditary trade in the United States is that of the deep water pilot. At most of the important seaports pilotage has been confined for generations to a few families. The Delaware pilots congregate at Lewes, where they have lived these many generations.

On a clear day an object raised one foot above a level plain can be seen 1.31 miles; one foot 1 1/2, 4.15 miles; one 30 feet high, 5.86 miles; one 100 feet high, 13.1 miles, and one a mile high (as the top of a mountain), almost 34 miles.

A curio dealer at Amoy, China, owns a group of figures carved from gnarled tree roots which stands 9 feet high, weighs 500 pounds and is valued at \$150.

General Advertisements.

JOHN NOTT.

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